the learned judge for not accepting STC's version was non-production of STC's witnessess;

(d) whether STC deputed two officers other than STC's witnesses to London and one of them took his wife on free ticket; and

(e) if so, the reasons why STC did not produce its witnesses and instead allowed free ticket to one of Director's wife?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) to (e) STC deputed its Director (Law) and General Manager (Law) to attend the Court proceedings at London in Dec.'96 and appear before the court as witnesses if so advised by the counsel in a case in which damages were claimed for import of sugar by M/s. Andre & Cie, S.A. Laussane. The two main witnesses of the Corpn. were listed as accused persons in a criminal case registered by CBI on 5th Jan.'96 and are under suspension. In view of the criminal case, there were difficulties in obtaining valid travel documents and credibility of such witnesses was highly doubtful. Written witness statements of these two witnesses and others were produced before the Court in addition to documents of the Corpn. The Court, however, ruled against STC. CBI after verification of the deal sought Government's concurrence for registration of a regular criminal case against STC officials. Necessary approval for registration of a regular case against Director (Finance) STC has been accorded on 11.3.1997 and he is also placed under suspension.

One of the officers who travelled to London for attending the above proceedings availed the facility of free companion ticket as per the scheme extended by the airlines.

KMML Employees Request to Enhance Import Duty on Titanium Dioxide

4018. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the employees of Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd., Chavara Kollam, Kerala had been requesting Government to enhance the import duty on Titanium Dioxide Pigment to restrict import of Titanium Dioxide.

(b) whether it is also a fact that the above company is unable to compete with multinationals who are dumping similar products thereby causing severe problems to the local companies including KMML;

(c) what action has been taken by Government on the requests made by the employees in this regard; and

(d) if Government do not propose to accede to their requests, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. A representation has been received from employees of Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd., to increase import duty on Titanium Dioxide.

In the budget for 1997-98, even though duty on all other chemicals has been reduced from 40% to 30%, import duty on Titanium Dioxide has been retained at 40%. However, with a view to restrict the volume of Titanium Dioxide imported under Duty Exemption Scheme, Titanium Dioxide in all forms including pigments has been included in the list of sensitive items for imports.

No petition on the imposition of anti dumping duty on dumping of similar products by multi-nationals in India has been received.

Misuse of Advance Licences

4019. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the findings of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) detecting large scale misuse